A group of Jin opera performers taking pictures on stage before a show at an outdoor theatre in Yu county.

A group of Jin opera performers chatting backstage at an outdoor theatre in a village in Yanan, China's Shaanxi province. — AFP photo

This picture taken on March 30, 2017 shows a Jin opera performer preparing backstage at an outdoor theatre in Yu county.

People watching a Jin opera performer (right) on stage at an outdoor theatre in Yu county.

A Jin opera performer using her mobile phone to take a selfie backstage at an outdoor theatre in Yu county.

Opera troupe tours rural China defending a dying art

China defending a dying art

The reowned Italian K Stars Cosmetics inaugurates its first branch in Kuwait

The renowned Italian K Stars Cosmetics, opened its first beauty branch in Kuwait, which is located at The Cube Mall in Safatya. The launch ceremony was attended by a number of social media influencers, bloggers, beauty specialists, fashionistas, as well as media delegates. The internationally recognized Italian brand offers a full line of cosmetics and makeup products that suit all tastes and demands. During the event, guests expressed their delight to introduce the K Stars line of products in Kuwait, which is known for its excellence, finest quality, affordable price and wide variety that suit all age ranges, which is in turn enable it to compete with international brands in the local market. The launch of the first K Stars branch in the Cube Mall is just the beginning for further expansion in Kuwait and abroad. In addition to broadening their business even more, the management team of K Stars is committed to provide the best professional service for clients, both individuals and retailers, as well as to conduct professional training opportunities and workshops for beauticians and sellers in the local market.

The greatest problem they face now is attracting young recruits willing to endure the nomadic life of an actor, a life without financial guarantees. “Most of them don’t have health insurance,” Wang said. “Jobs are like a sword dangling over their heads.” If a March performance in Yu county’s Baocao village, there were 500 people in the seating area, but some attendees had brought their own chairs. When watched from inside their cars, or parked cars being a rickshaw driver himself, the performer said, before the county’s coal plants closed and the migration to urban areas, about 200 mostly elderly kids come, with babies in their arms. They heard about the show through word of mouth. One of the five young people, 20-year-old Zhang, Shuhua, had attended several performances with her grandmother. “I like and interesting, but I don’t really understand it,” Zhang said. Garbed in a colorful robe, Li Min, a 60-year-old actress, said, “When you are on stage you never feel cold.”

Earned dangling over their heads

An 'iron rice bowl' no more

The group of 90 has been active since 1985, drawing its members from the audience held across Yu county. The performers join when they are between 13 and 15 years old, those who stay have known each other their entire adult lives. Liu Donghai, a former actor who now helps manage the troupe, recalled that being chosen from among more than a thousand kids had felt like winning the lottery. His parents were thrilled because, being a state institution at the time, the troupe offered him an “iron rice bowl” - the Chinese tradition of security jobs.

A general view of a Jin opera performance at an outdoor theatre in Yu county.